

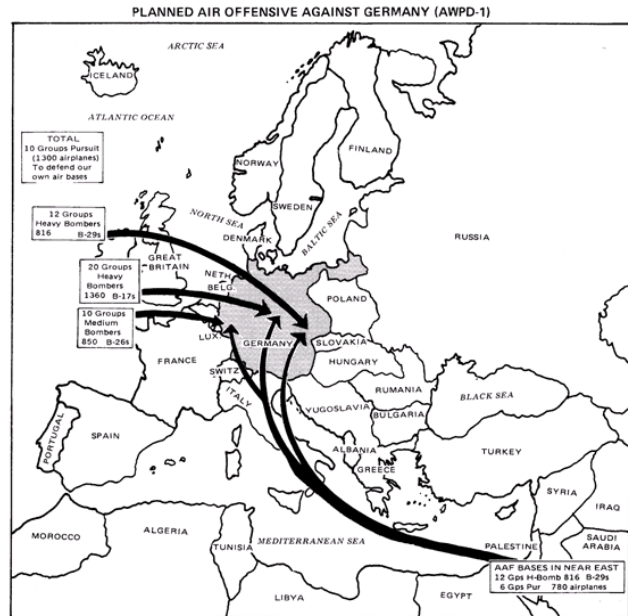


U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 30 July – 5 August 2012



4 August 1941 **Air War Planning Document 1 (AWPD-1)** outlined the Army Air Forces strategy for the imminent war with the Axis powers. President Roosevelt had asked the Army and Navy in July 1941 to estimate the production that would be required to defeat the Axis. General Hap Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces Chief, had the new Air War Plans Division prepare the air portion. Lt. Col. Harold L. George, Lt. Col. Kenneth N. Walker, Maj. Haywood S. Hansell, Jr., and Maj. Laurence S. Kuter, forecast the aircraft necessary to defeat Germany. Based on seven years of tactical school theories, AWPD-1 said the Army Air Forces would need 251 combat groups, 105,467 aircraft, and 2,164,916 airmen. With most of Europe under Nazi control and tensions high in the Pacific, this estimate was accepted, almost without question, as the basis for planning the wartime air campaign. Completed on August 12, AWPD-1 outlined a strategic bombing campaign against key enemy target sets.



4 August 1941 An **intercepted message** from the Japanese Foreign Ministry to its embassy in Berlin was made available to the President Roosevelt's cabinet. An excerpt:

"Commercial and economic relations between Japan and third countries, led by England and the United States, are gradually becoming so horribly strained that we cannot endure it much longer. Consequently, our Empire, to save its very life, must take measures to secure the raw materials of the South Seas. Our Empire must immediately take steps to break asunder this ever-strengthening chain of encirclement which is being woven under the guidance and with the participation of England and the United States, acting like a cunning dragon seemingly asleep. This is why we decided to obtain military bases in French Indo-China and to have our troops occupy that territory ..."

1 August 1943 **Operation TIDAL WAVE:** 177 B-24 Liberators flying out of Libya used low-level routes to bomb the oil refineries in Ploesti, Rumania. This oil refinery complex was Nazi Germany's most important source of petroleum products. This was the first large-scale, minimum-altitude attack against a strongly defended target, and the longest major bombing mission undertaken to date. Fifty-four of the 177 B-24s were lost, and five Medals of Honor were awarded to aircrew members. (At left, B-24s over Ploesti.)





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3 August 1944 The **Far East Air Forces** (FEAF), predecessor of PACAF, was **officially activated** at Brisbane, Australia, with Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney commanding.

30 July 1948 North American Aviation delivered the **USAF's first operational jet bomber**—the B-45A Tornado. Later, it became the first USAF aircraft to carry a tactical nuclear bomb.

3 August 1950 **Korean War.** General Stratemeyer ordered 5th Air Force to interdict all enemy transportation and destroy key transportation facilities between the 37th and 38th parallels.

5 August 1950 Major Louis J. Seville, flying on a combat mission in the Korean War, earned the **first Medal of Honor awarded to a member of the Air Force**. Seville had flown 68 combat missions in World War II as a B-26 bomber pilot. In the fall of 1948, he took command of the 67th Squadron, 18th Fighter-Bomber Group. When the Korean War began, his squadron was one of the first sent to Japan. Seville's Medal of Honor citation includes this excerpt:



During an attack on a camouflaged area containing a concentration of enemy troops, artillery, and armored vehicles, Major Seville's F-51 aircraft was severely damaged by antiaircraft fire. Although fully cognizant of the short period he could remain airborne, he deliberately ignored the possibility of survival by abandoning the aircraft or by crash landing, and continued his attack against the enemy forces threatening the security of friendly ground troops. In his determination to inflict maximum damage upon the enemy, Major Seville again exposed himself to the intense fire of enemy gun batteries and dived on the target to his death.

See the Air Force article on Major Seville at this [website](#).



4 August 1955 Captured on January 13, 1953, crew members of a special operations RB-29 called ***Stardust 40*** were released by China. Shot down during a night leaflet drop mission, they were held longer than any other prisoners of war in the Korean conflict. Below, an RB-29 similar to ***Stardust 40***.





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31 July 1957 **The Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line was declared fully operational.** This string of radar installations across the Canadian Arctic was to warn of enemy bomber attacks.



1 August 1960 The Air Force accepted the **first operational B-58 Hustler** medium bomber. The first U.S. supersonic bomber, the delta-wing aircraft could fly at twice the speed of sound and could be refueled in flight. However, the B-58 was expensive, difficult to fly and had limited range and payload. Advanced surface-to-air missiles forced SAC planners to adopt low altitude tactics, where the Hustler lost its supersonic speed and its range was further reduced. By the 1970s, the B-58 was replaced by the FB-111.

2 August 1994 Two B-52 Stratofortresses of the 2nd Bombardment Wing set a **world record circumnavigating the Earth** during a show-of-force mission to Kuwait. The 47-hour flight took five aerial refuelings and delivered 54 bombs to a range near the Iraqi border on the fourth anniversary of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. (Below, a B-52 from the 2nd Bomb Wing.)

